

In 1996, with Michael Hays as Flotilla Commander, you were given the award as Outstanding Flotilla in Division 5.

In 1997, led by Tim Martell, you collected two of seven District awards for flotillas, for public affairs and for highest number of vessel examinations.

Looking at recent Auxiliary Management Information System (AUXMIS) reports, which I thank your Immediate Past Commodore and District Staff Officer for Information Systems, Marilyn McBain for making happen, I see you're still building good numbers:

I see strength in your membership—77, which includes 14 Auxiliary Operators!

I see strength in your public education: two Boating Skills and Seamanship (BS&S) and three Sailing and Seamanship (S&S) courses in 1996; four BS&S, one S&S and four Boating Safely courses given in 1997; and 19 class sessions in various courses given so far this year.

I see strength in your vessel examination program: 20 examiners conducting 459 CME's in 1997, up from 210 in 1996—and you've already completed 210 exams so far this year.

I see strength in your Marine Dealer Visit Program, with between five and seven Marine Dealer Visitors making 66 visits in 1996, 88 visits in 1997, and still building numbers this year.

In these and all your other programs—Operations, Public Affairs, Member Training—you show that the Diablo Flotilla is active, is connecting with the public, is making a difference. I hope you still have room on your trophy shelf, since you'll no doubt be adding more "hardware" to it!

This brings us to today. I stand here as the Group Commander within whose area of responsibility you spread the gospel of safe boating. I'm here to tell you that I am your partner in serving the public—the Coast Guard's customers in the lower Delta and Suisun Bay. Our safety missions are mutually dependent, and firmly linked together. Since taking command of Group San Francisco last Summer, I have embarked the Group on the strategy of community interaction. Yes, we in the Group do exist to provide critical search and rescue resources to the citizens of Central California and to enforce Federal laws where necessary. But the greatest of our missions is in protecting the safety of recreational boaters in the area we serve. I see the recreational boater's life as a continuum, starting when they buy and equip their vessel, continuing hopefully with some good education. Then comes the voyage, which usually, hopefully ends safely, but sometimes ends in a search and rescue case or an adverse Coast Guard boarding. In the past we at the Group dwelled too much on that far end of the continuum, especially in our huge number of law enforcement boardings—and I'm sure you read about it in the local maritime press. Where I am guiding our efforts now is to the start of that continuum—before the boater gets underway. To that end, I've directed Group personnel to steer their efforts at meeting and getting to know the boaters:

We're walking the docks, boat ramps, and marinas, seeing the boaters with their vessels, answering their questions, giving advice, steering them toward the products you offer—vessel exams and boating safety courses.

We're making more public appearances: at boat shows, yacht clubs, service clubs, and schools.

We're making friendly contacts with boaters on the water, commending them for safe boating practices, for wearing their personal flotation devices (PFDs), for being conscientious.

We're listening to the boaters, constantly looking for better ways we can serve them.

Finally, to show my regard for your vessel exam program, I have directed Coast Guard crews to not conduct random boardings on recreational vessels showing a current Courtesy Marine Examination sticker. We'll still board all vessels, including those with current CMEs, any time we can articulate a valid reason, such as for unsafe operation. But again, we will not randomly board vessels showing the sticker—proof of their commitment to equip their boats properly. I believe in your vessel exam program, and want to give boaters all possible motivation to let you aboard!

In all our efforts, while we won't ever give up our responsibility to enforce boating safety law when necessary, we're out to show the boating public that we're a partner with them in maximizing success and enjoyment in their boating experience. In face-to-face contact I want them to see that we're real people, just like them, who have an important job to do.

Now, here's where our fortunes really are linked. It's no surprise that we all have been searching for good measures of effectiveness in our boating safety programs—for ways that we can relate our hours of effort into the desired outcome of safer boating. Knowing that the Commandant has established a goal that we save at least 90 percent of distressed boaters after Coast Guard notification, I think we can make a difference there. To that end, I am measuring the number of person hours and personal contacts made by Group San Francisco people. This hopefully will translate in the next couple years to an increase in the number of people coming to you for vessel examinations and registering for safe boating courses—whether Coast Guard Auxiliary or U.S. Power Squadron. Finally, increased vessel exams and boating course students should translate to both a reduction in search and rescue cases among recreational boaters and better outcomes for the cases we do respond to. We're making the effort to encourage boating safety, and hope that our future numbers bear it out.

With this, I ask a couple things of you, the Diablo Flotilla. First, keep up the great work. You've got a rich tradition, going back to earliest days of the Auxiliary. You've got the strength in numbers to keep it going. Second, work to ensure that the quality of your vessel exam and public education programs is second to none, along with your Marine Dealer Visit Program, which is yet another way that we can direct boaters to the services we offer. I'm depending on it and I'm doing the same with the services that we in Group San Francisco perform.

In closing, I'm extremely proud to call you partners, members of Team Coast Guard and Team Group San Francisco. Be proud of where your Flotilla has come from, of the missions you've performed, and of your excellence yet to come. We'll be there with you. May we all be—Semper Paratus. Thank you. •

RETIREMENT OF MR. A. GERALD ERICKSON

• Ms. MOSELEY-BRAUN. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes today to recognize a gentleman who is retiring from a distinguished career as President of the Chicago-based Metropolitan Family Services, Mr. A. Gerald Erickson. In his 27 years as President of this valuable agency, Jerry Erickson has demonstrated an outstanding level of commitment to under-served families and individuals in Chicago. Under his leadership, Met-

ropolitan Family Services has a record of great accomplishments in improving the opportunities and quality of life for thousands of low-income Chicagoans.

In 1958, Jerry Erickson began his career with the agency, then known as United Charities, as a social worker fresh out of school and a two year stint in the Army. After earning a Master's Degree in Social Work from the University of Chicago in 1960, Jerry remained with United Charities full time, and in 1971 became President.

Two and a half years ago, and a quarter of a century into Mr. Erickson's tenure, United Charities changed its name to Metropolitan Family Services. Through this and many other organizational changes over the years, Jerry Erickson has remained steadfastly committed to serving the underprivileged residents of the Chicago metropolitan area.

As Chicago's oldest and largest non-sectarian social services organization, Metropolitan Family Services provides services ranging from family counseling to financial education for more than 100,000 families in the Chicago area. The agency operates on an annual budget of approximately \$22 million, and has recently concluded a successful \$15 million private fundraising campaign. The success of the organization can be attributed to the committed hard work of all of the agency's staff, and to great leadership from Jerry Erickson. Through their efforts, the agency's future will be bright and long-lasting.

Through out his career, Jerry Erickson has carried himself in a soft-spoken, modest manner which has led many of his colleagues in the field of social work to refer to him as the "Jimmy Stewart of social services." Now, in classic Jerry Erickson character, he is quietly retiring as the President of Metropolitan Family Services and is passing the reigns on to a successor he helped choose.

Those who know and work with Jerry Erickson should be heartened by his promise to continue to work as a consultant to social service agencies. And Jerry's successor, Richard Jones, Ph.D., is highly qualified and committed to continuing and expanding the great work of Metropolitan Family Services.

Through his work with Metropolitan Family Services, as well as his participation and leadership in various national social services task forces, associations, and alliances, Jerry Erickson has well earned his reputation as a national leader in social work. Jerry Erickson's work is a model of service for all Americans to follow, and I commend his lasting commitment to serving the most vulnerable in our society.

On behalf of all the lives he has touched in his outstanding career with Metropolitan Family Services, I want to thank him and wish him good luck and Godspeed in all of his new endeavors. •